

JEAN D'OR PRAIRIE

Sub-Regional Integrated Resource Plan

SEP 26 1985

Alberta

JEAN D'OR PRAIRIE
SUB-REGIONAL
INTEGRATED RESOURCE PLAN

Approved by the Economic Planning and Resource
Development Committee of Cabinet on June 5, 1985

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Edmonton

Alberta
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
Resource Evaluation and Planning Division

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PREFACE

This planning document was prepared by involved government agencies and public consultants in recognition of the need for improved management of Alberta's lands and resources. It applies only to public lands within the Jean D'Or Prairie planning area, and not to any private or federal lands.

The plan presents the Government of Alberta's resource management policy for the public lands and resources within the area. It is intended to be a guide to resource managers, industry and publics having responsibility or interests in the area rather than a regulatory mechanism. Resource potentials and opportunities for development are identified with a view to assisting in the economic progress of Alberta. The plan is sufficiently flexible so that all future proposals for land use and development may be considered. No legitimate proposals will be categorically rejected. The provincial government is committed to serving Albertans; should a proposal not be in keeping with the provisions of the plan, every means will be taken to explore alternative means for accommodating the proposal in a more appropriate location, either in this planning area or on other public lands. The rejection of any proposals will only be done in writing by the associate minister or his designate.

A detailed outline for implementation will be provided for this sub-regional plan in order to identify the necessary implementation actions and roles. This implementation outline will also provide for the continuing review of the plan so that it may accommodate changing needs and situations. Wherever possible, the private sector will be provided the opportunity to be actively involved in the operational delivery of the plan.

Implementation is to be subject to normal budgetary approval process with overall priorities to be established with consideration of opportunities in other planning areas and areas currently outside the planning process.

While the plan identifies resource potentials and opportunities, the realization of these may require the dedication of major amounts of public funds. The plan will be used on the understanding that any actions required for implementation will only be undertaken as budgetary approvals are given in the normal way. The private sector will be given the first opportunity to provide any development required.

This plan has no legal status and is subject to revisions or review at the discretion of the Associate Minister of Public Lands and Wildlife.

HIGHLIGHT SUMMARY

The Jean D'Or Planning Area is located in north-central Alberta, approximately 30 km (50 mi.) east of High Level and encompasses about 150 000 hectares (367 500 acres). It was one of five areas identified for agricultural expansion by the Lower Peace River Regional Overview (ENR) 1981.

The plan exists to express the government's intentions for the allocation, use and management of public lands and resources. It promotes co-ordinated management of resources and creates opportunities for private sector development.

An agricultural land base of 38 866 hectares (96 000 acres) is established by realigning the Green/White Area boundary. Approximately 26 530 hectares (65 000 acres) is recommended for addition to the present White Area. By directing agricultural activity to the expanded White Area, a more firmly established forest land base will be created, adequate to meet existing Timber Quota Commitments within the planning area.

A Special Use area is identified to restrict land use on river floodplains, as well as, protect steep valley walls from erosion. This area corresponds with important fisheries and wildlife habitat and sites with potential for recreation.

In areas of agricultural expansion, the fisheries and wildlife resources will be affected. Although it may appear to have major effects on a regional basis, it is a familiar pattern of land use change in Alberta.

The plan recommendations accommodate the concern of local residents to establish a more "viable farming community". This is achieved by designating much of the area for new farm units, thus increasing the population base and subsequently the demand for agri-services.

Minerals exploration and development will continue to be conducted under standard operating conditions within the planning area.

In summary, the recommended expansion of the agricultural land base can be achieved with minimal adverse effects on other resources in the Jean D'Or Prairie area while providing resource use and management benefits to the region.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Plan History and Process

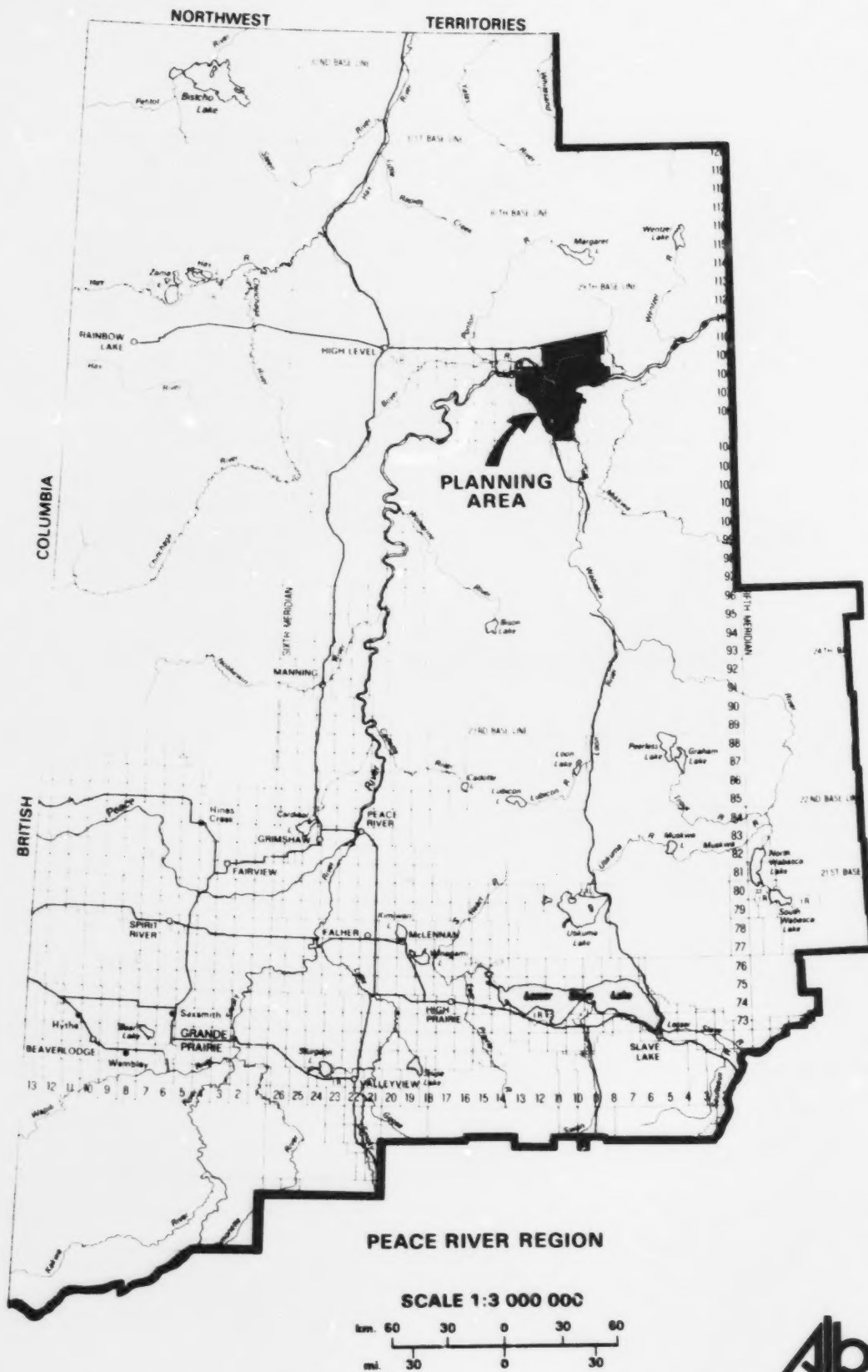
The Jean D'Or Prairie planning area (Figure 1) was identified by the Lower Peace River Regional Overview (ENR 1981) as having potential for agricultural development. Based on that assessment, the Interdepartmental Assistant Deputy Ministers' Committee identified the area as a priority for the development of an integrated resource plan. At that time, government agencies were notified and given opportunity to participate in the planning exercise with varying levels of involvement.

An integrated decision making process has been used in the development of the Jean D'Or Prairie Sub-regional Integrated Resource Plan. Integrated resource planning relies on a systematic approach to problem solving. In essence, the method is composed of three fundamental stages. The first stage consists of gathering information; the second, making a choice among alternatives and the third, pursuing action.

In the development of an integrated resource plan, the three basic elements of the decision-making model are refined into more detailed steps with varying formal and technical requirements. (See Figure 2).

The decision-making process is intended primarily as an aid to better planning. The major purpose in applying the concept is to ensure that decisions are made rationally, and that all relevant factors are adequately considered prior to selecting the most favorable course of management action. Another objective is to realize a degree of consistency in all planning efforts.

The decision-making process is used co-operatively by means of a planning team approach. Planning teams consist of representatives from government agencies having major responsibilities or interests in resource management on public lands within the planning area. It is essential that resource management agencies be represented on planning teams by staff who can relate to the problems and needs of the planning area. Planning team representation is on either a participating or



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Fig.1 Regional Location Of Jean D'Or Prairie Planning Area

Figure 2

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

STAGE	STEP (PROCESS) NAME	DOCUMENTS PRODUCED
Information	1. Plan initiation	Terms of Reference
	2. Data collection and analysis	Background Information*
	3. Plan policy	Resource Management Policy
Choice	4. Plan design	Draft Plan
	5. Final review and approval	Final Plan
Action	6. Plan implementation	* *
	7. Plan review and approval	* *

* Optional Document

* * Agency operational plans, annual reports and major review documents may be drafted/printed at these steps.

consulting basis and allows the team to work as a small, effective group, while affording resource management agencies the opportunity to participate to the extent required by their level of responsibility or concern in the planning area. Participating team members must be prepared to commit considerable time to the planning process on a day-to-day basis and, therefore, must have direct interest in the management of the area concerned and in implementation of the plan. Consulting team members do not require day-to-day involvement in development of the plan. However, they are provided an opportunity to present agency concerns and opinions at key stages of the planning process.

Participating team members include representatives from:

- Alberta Agriculture
- Alberta Environment
- Alberta Forest Service, Alberta Energy and Natural Resources (AFS)
- Public Lands Division, Alberta Energy and Natural Resources
- Fish and Wildlife Division, Alberta Energy and Natural Resources
- Resource Planning Branch, Alberta Energy and Natural Resources

Consulting team members are composed of agencies within the Government of Alberta, local authorities and major provincial interest groups. Government of Alberta consultants include representatives from:

- Alberta Recreation and Parks
- Mineral Resources Division, Alberta Energy and Natural Resources
- Alberta Transportation
- Alberta Culture
- Alberta Tourism and Small Business
- Native Secretariat
- Northern Alberta Development Council

Local authority consultants include representatives from:

- MacKenzie Regional Planning Commission
- Improvement District 23 Council
- MLA - Peace River
- Improvement District 23 - Agricultural Development Committee

Provincial interest group consultants include:

- Alberta Fish and Game Association
- Alberta Forest Products Association

- Canadian Petroleum Association/Independent Petroleum Association of Canada
- Alberta Wilderness Association
- Unifarm Association

The planning team was formed and began to develop the Jean D'Or Prairie Sub-regional Plan - Terms of Reference (ENR 1981). Included in the document were:

1. Planning area description
2. Purpose of the plan
3. Agency concerns and issues
4. Methods for data collection
5. Description of decision-making process
6. The plan schedule

This document was completed and received Resource Integration Committee (RIC) endorsement in June, 1981.

Although much data had been collected on the planning area by various agencies, it was not until the endorsement of the Terms of Reference that the data collection and analysis step was officially underway. The planning team recognized a need for a documented strategy or approach to the data collection and analysis step, but rather than prepare a background information document, the team opted for the preparation of A Strategy for Data Collection in the Jean D'Or Prairie Area (1981). This document ensured a checklist of all necessary areas required for data collection and a division of labor among the government agencies involved.

Each team agency spent considerable time preparing present use, demand, capability and potential use data. The planning team relied heavily on the Ecological Land Classification and Evaluation - Jean D'Or Prairie (Strong, 1981) in preparing capability information.

Other papers prepared by the planning team agencies during this stage of the planning process are: Farming Potential of the Jean D'Or Prairie Area - An Economic Assessment (Alberta Agriculture, 1981), Jean D'Or Prairie Area - Drainage Overview (Alberta Environment, 1982) and Evaluation of Soils and Agricultural Suitability - Jean D'Or Prairie (Pedology Consultants, Leskiw and Twardy, 1982).

Utilizing all the data collected and the documents prepared, the planning team developed a Plan Policy Options paper and submitted it to the Resource Integratin Committee in June, 1982. The Resource Integration Committee, using the options paper, directed the planning

team in the preparation of the Jean D'Or Prairie Sub-Regional Plan - Plan Policy (ENR, 1982). This document included the following elements:

1. Planning area - broad resource objectives
2. Resource uses (and their definitions) projected to take place within the planning area
3. The management intent for the planning area
4. Resource management zones used to achieve the management intent of the plan
5. Resource use/zone matrix
6. Resource management policy land allocation

The Plan Policy was an intermediate document in the planning process which established a specific direction for the planning team, and acted as an interim statement of the progress made towards the final plan. It received Resource Integration Committee endorsement in October, 1982.

This present document is the product of the plan design step of the planning process. It contains elements of the Plan Policy to ensure understanding of the more specific detail in the plan. Section one of the document is an introductory chapter including the history of the plan and descriptive synopsis of the planning area. Section two is the Resource Management Strategy and includes the management intent, planning area broad resource objectives, common resource management guidelines and the resource management policy land allocation. Section three is entitled Resource Management Areas and examines, more specifically, the management intent, resource objectives and resource management guidelines applicable to the six resource management areas. Section four identifies the refinement to the Green Area boundary. Section five is a discussion of the implications of recommendations made in the plan. Finally, the last section deals with the plan management. The plan will apply only to land and resources vested in the Crown.

1.2 Planning Area Description

The Jean D'Or Prairie planning area (Figure 3) is located in north-central Alberta, approximately 590 km (365 miles) north of Edmonton and consists of 150 000 hectares (367 500 acres). The area is bounded by Highway 58 on the north, Highway 67 on the west, Township 105 in the south and the Wabasca River and the Jean D'Or Prairie Indian Reserve (IR 215) on the east.

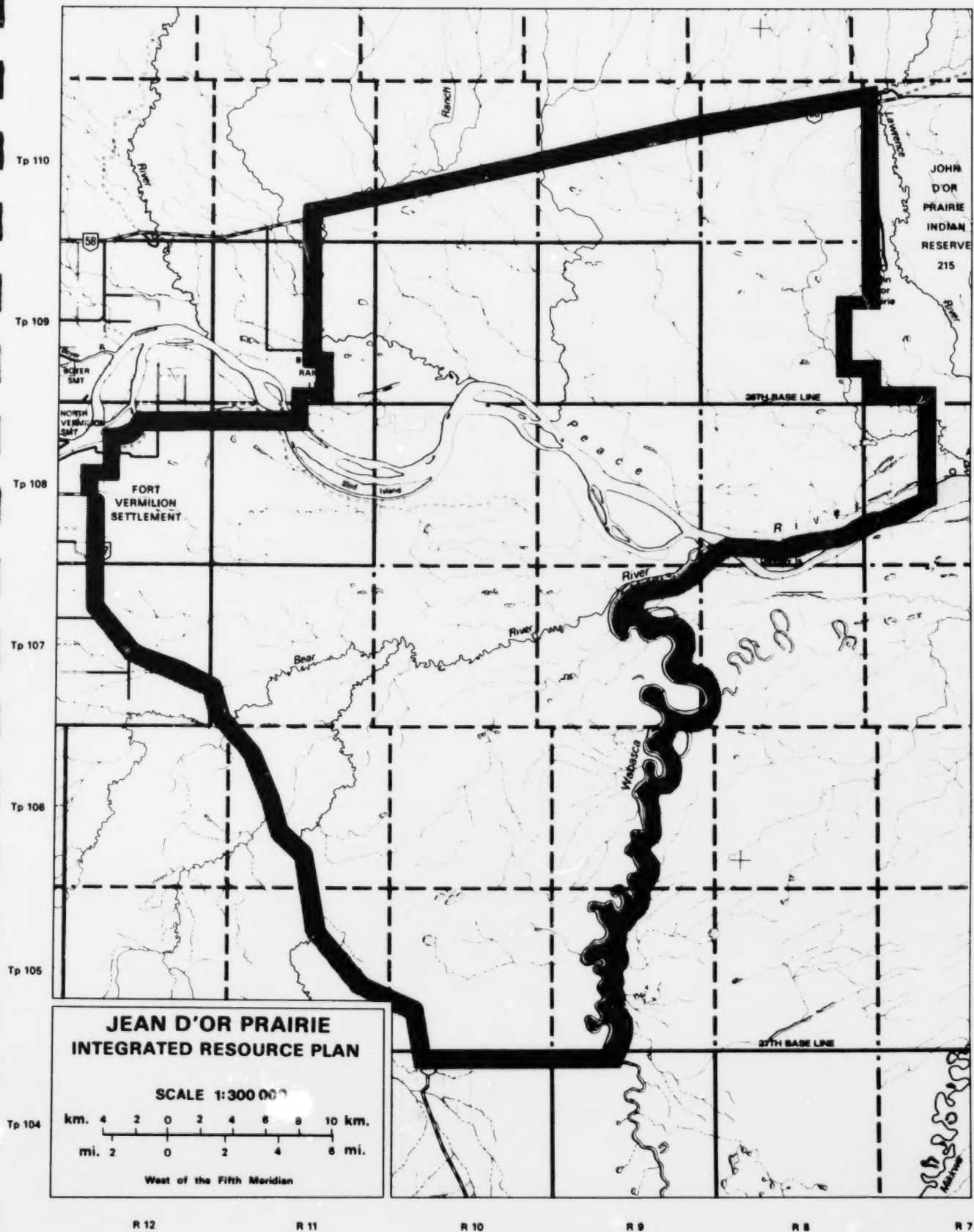


Fig.3 Jean D'Or Prairie Planning Area

The Jean D'Or Prairie planning area is within the Lower Peace River region and has a boreal climate with large irregular weather extremes both from day to day and year to year. The continentality results from the area's great distance from the moderating influence of large water bodies and its northern latitudinal location.

More specifically, the planning area lies within the Fort Vermilion Lowlands which is a broad basin formerly inundated by glacial Lake Tyrell. The terrain of the area is characteristically that of a lake basin. The overall surface expression is level to very gently undulating. Minor relief (less than a metre) produces major changes in drainage. The upper surface consists of well-to moderately well-drained lacustrine sediments, while the shallow depressions are filled with poorly drained organic deposits.

Within the Jean D'Or Prairie planning area, 11 sub-groups of six soil orders were recognized: Solonetzic, Luvisolic, Gleysolic, Organic, Brunisolic and Regosolic orders. Solonetzic soils generally occur north of the Peace River, while gray luvisolic soils occur on well to imperfectly drained sites throughout the planning area south of the Peace River.

When compared on a provincial basis, the soils have a low to moderate capability for till cropping. Local history has shown that similar soils in the Fort Vermilion area have reacted well to proper management practices, as evidenced by the success of area farms. This local success has fostered further demand for agricultural expansion which, on the average, exceeds the supply by at least three times.

The Jean D'Or Prairie planning area occurs within the dry portion of the Boreal Mixedwood Ecoregion (Strong and Leggat, 1981). As a result of the relatively-warm dry boreal climate, the area is dominated by deciduous forests. Aspen is the dominant overstory species with secondary quantities of balsam poplar. Balsam poplar increases in abundance where the water table is seasonally high. Jackpine occurs infrequently. White spruce is common, although it is primarily found in the understory. In the planning area, as well as throughout the Boreal Mixedwood Ecoregion, white spruce and balsam fir are the theoretical climax species. Fire has played a significant role in limiting the occurrence of white spruce.

The Jean D'Or Prairie planning area is subject to Timber Quota commitments, Miscellaneous Timber Use Areas, with possible future developments pertinent to the deciduous component of the forest. The area represents a portion of the Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) for

the F5 and F7 Forest Management Units. The most important aspect of the timber resource within the area is the age relative to yield and future utilization. The capability for forest growth is rated moderate to high and the spruce understory will become quite valuable as it succeeds the aspen component.

The potential for domestic grazing within the Jean D'Or Prairie planning area is low, resulting from the severe weather conditions limiting the volume of forage produced. Another limiting factor associated with domestic grazing potential is the predation of domestic livestock. Presently, there appears to be a latent demand for domestic grazing as outlined in the Jean D'Or Prairie Sub-Regional Plan - Terms of Reference (ENR 1981). This demand is not expected to significantly change within the foreseeable future and is currently satisfied by the Fort Vermilion Grazing Reserve. If necessary, additional land may be made available within the planning area.

The potential, along with the projected demand for recreation, is low within the Jean D'Or Prairie planning area. The Peace and Wabasca Rivers offer the best possible conditions and attractions for extensive recreation. Hunting, fishing and water-based activities are significant recreational pursuits and are seen as requiring limited facility development. As the farming community expands, an increase in demand for low density recreational opportunities may be anticipated.

Habitat capability for ungulates, furbearers and waterfowl was assessed for the Jean D'Or Prairie planning area using a combination of survey data, trapline records and ecological parameters (vegetation and landscape features). Approximately 25 per cent of the area was considered to have a moderate or better capability to support ungulates, primarily moose. White tail deer are found along the major river breaks, and buffalo were noted in some sedge meadow areas.

Only those areas which contain water bodies (ponds, lakes, streams, rivers or organic sites) are considered to have more than a low capability to support aquatic furbearers (beaver, muskrat and mink) and waterfowl. Most of the planning area produces upland furbearers, including coyote, lynx, fox, wolf, fisher, marten, black bear, weasel and squirrel.

The Peace and Wabasca Rivers provide year-round habitat for fish, including pike, walleye, goldeye, grayling, burbot and white sucker. Tributary streams provide essential spawning habitat for sport fish. There are no lakes in the area with potential fish habitat.

The mineral resources have not been thoroughly evaluated. Geophysical exploration has been conducted in most of the area and nine wildcat wells have been drilled. However, no petroleum or natural gas has yet been discovered. Industry interest is indicated by the disposition of petroleum and natural gas rights which cover 20 per cent of the planning area. Present leases are located north of the Peace River, near Fort Vermilion and along the Wabasca River. The potential for other minerals in the area is low.

The majority of the Jean D'Or Prairie planning area has little or no environmental or surface operability problems associated with surface disturbance. This assumes that reasonable care and proper safeguards are undertaken. Stream channels and river banks have the greatest relief and, as a result, have a higher risk associated with their disturbance.

2. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT POLICY

This section of the plan includes some important elements of the Jean D'Or Prairie Sub-Regional Plan - Plan Policy (ENR, 1982) developed at the plan policy step of the process. The plan policy elements discussed are: 1) the management intent of the plan, 2) planning area broad resource objectives, 3) common resource management guidelines applicable to the broad resource objectives and 4) the resource management policy land allocation.

2.1 Management Intent

The intent of the plan is to make available additional public lands for agricultural expansion. The demand is mainly for lands suitable for till cropping, but there is a latent demand for domestic grazing. It is important to note that agricultural expansion cannot take place in isolation from the other resource concerns within the area. Increased agricultural production, through expansion, will have effects on timber availability, watershed management and fisheries and wildlife management.

2.2 Broad Resource Objectives and Guidelines

The Jean D'Or Prairie plan has been developed within the scope of the broad resource objectives identified at the plan policy step of the planning process. These broad objectives reflect government priorities for the Jean D'Or Prairie planning area within the context of the Peace River region and are expressed as they relate to a particular resource. Following the broad resource objectives for each resource are the common resource management guidelines developed at plan design.

2.2.1 Domestic Grazing

Objectives

1. To identify areas capable of supporting domestic grazing.

2. To provide for current and future demand, where possible, for domestic grazing in accordance with existing Alberta Energy and Natural Resources range management policy and eligibility criteria.
3. To ensure the compatibility of domestic grazing with other resource management programs.

Guidelines

1. Refer to the detailed operational soil survey and capability analysis scheduled to meet the objectives for till cropping allocation (page 16). Following this assessment, the identification of rangeland allocation will be done in response to specific applications for domestic grazing lands. This identification will acknowledge domestic grazing lands as a supplement to existing farm units and secondary to demand for till cropping in the Agriculture areas. (See page 21, Figure 4, Resource Management Policy-Land Allocation.)
2. Applications for domestic grazing in the Multiple Use areas will be verified as per the eligibility criteria for the Alberta Energy and Natural Resources range management program. Additional areas, capable of supporting domestic grazing, will be identified based on the frequency of applications received and will be provided as a supplement to the range management program in the Agriculture areas.
3. Any improved grazing practices in the Agriculture area, which result in significant clearing of natural vegetation, will require an approved Range Development Plan prepared by the Public Lands Division involving input from affected government agencies.
4. Assessment of applicants' needs on an individual basis for range improvement programs in accordance with the Public Grazing Land Range Improvement Program is presently in effect. An approved Range Improvement Plan prepared by the AFS is a necessary prerequisite for range improvements in the Multiple Use area.
5. Applicants will be encouraged to apply for Agriculture area lands showing potential for domestic grazing prior to Multiple Use area allocations.

6. Progressive range development will be employed so that range improvement does not occur in isolated pockets, creating forest protection hazards and service logistical problems.

2.2.2 Ecological Resources

Objective

1. To protect both representative and unique areas of the natural environment having provincial significance for recreational, scientific or educational use.

Guideline

1. Resource uses in the planning area will be monitored using the internal referral system and areas determined to be of ecological significance may be placed under reservation or notation.

2.2.3 Fisheries

Objectives

1. To maintain viable populations of present fish species.
2. To encourage habitat retention in areas designated for agricultural development for the maintenance or enhancement of fisheries populations.

Guidelines

1. Refer to water resources guidelines (pages 18 and 19).
2. Fisheries regulations will be enforced to ensure that consumptive uses are in compliance with the regulations, and that harvest does not exceed allowable limits.
3. The Fish and Wildlife Division, Habitat Protection Branch, will participate in the land use referral process to ensure that the interest of the fisheries resource is addressed.

2.2.4 Historical Resources

Objective

1. To protect historical resources (historic, prehistoric, palaeontological) from potential or actual impact related to future development conflicts, and to manage such resources for scientific, educational and recreational purposes.

Guidelines

1. Resource uses in the planning area requiring surface disturbance may require historic impact assessments as outlined in The Alberta Historical Resources Act, RSA 1980, c. 8.
2. Archaeological Survey of Alberta, Resource Management Section, will participate in the land use referral process to ensure that the interests of historical resources are addressed, as the area is potentially quite important for the discovery of historical resource sites.

2.2.5 Infrastructure

Objectives

1. To develop, construct and maintain an integrated transportation system for the movement of people and products in an efficient and safe manner.
2. To ensure that infrastructure, route or corridor developments result in minimal surface disturbances.

Guidelines

1. In the Agriculture area, an efficient road service network to the agricultural block units will be planned by the Public Lands Division, Alberta Transportation and Alberta Environment. This will take place following a detailed soil inventory by the Public Lands Division. The AFS will be notified of the location of the roads.
2. Access for timber production operations will be determined through co-operative planning efforts. This will

maximize the benefits from common transportation corridors and minimize the impacts associated with multiple surface disturbances. The Resource Road Planning Guidelines (AFS, 1982) is cited for reference.

3. Infrastructure, route, corridor and other developments are monitored by on-site inspections and aerial reconnaissance.

2.2.6 Mineral Resources

Objectives

1. To provide opportunities for industries to define the extent of, and develop or produce minerals where reserves have been proven.
2. To provide opportunities for mineral exploration in previously unexplored areas and formations within the Jean D'Or Prairie planning area.

Guidelines

1. Energy development proposals will be evaluated and monitored as per the Alberta Energy and Natural Resources referral system and accepted standards, practices and legislation associated with environmental protection.
2. Lands will be reclaimed in accordance with the Land Surface Conservation and Reclamation Act, RSA 1980. Follow-up inspections will be done before the issuance of a Reclamation Certificate.

2.2.7 Recreation

Objectives

1. To provide for a range of informal recreation opportunities with limited facility development.

Guidelines

1. A limited degree of site development may occur in response to public demand for low density recreational amenities associated with boating, hunting and fishing.

2. Recreational activities will be monitored and development scheduling modified, as necessary

2.2.8 Till Cropping

Objective

1. To supply a portion of the demand for agricultural land expansion (as recognized in the Accelerated Land Sales program) by making available suitable public land with the best capability for agricultural production. Since the demand is primarily for new farm units, first priority will be given to land capable of supporting new farms and second priority will be given to land suitable for farm expansion.

Guidelines

1. A detailed operational soil survey and capability analysis will be done to determine agricultural capability for specific uses.
2. Lands suitable for permanent disposition will be designated into arable block units for public posting.
3. In consultation among Public Lands Division, Alberta Transportation and Alberta Environment, an efficient road service network to the block units will be planned. AFS will be notified of the location of the roads.
4. Public Lands Division will consult Alberta Environment prior to posting any lands for sale. Where potential drainage problems are foreseen, posting will not proceed until a proper drainage and water management program has been developed by Alberta Environment.
5. Lands requiring resource conservation will be reserved from sale and may be allocated by lease to uses compatible with conservation restrictions.
6. Necessary agency referrals will be made to determine the best land use at an operational level.
7. Timber management in Agriculture areas will be on a liquidation basis. Timber reservations will follow existing policy guidelines and will be reviewed on a five year basis with an option to renew if required.

2.2.9 Timber

Objectives

1. To regulate the timber resource for sustained yield timber harvests while promoting a forest environment of high quality.
2. To manage the productive forest land base to ensure a long term supply of timber on a sustained yield basis to meet commercial and public needs from the F5 and F7 Forest Management Unit Timber Quotas and Miscellaneous Timber Use areas.
3. To reforest cutover areas and initiate afforestation projects on lands capable of supporting coniferous tree growth.
4. To protect the forest from damage and destruction by fire, insects, disease or other causes.

Guidelines

1. A revised Timber Management Plan will be completed for the F5 and F7 Forest Management Units by the end of 1985. The plans will define the productive timber land base and allocation methods for continued timber harvesting operations. Changes to the levels of timber harvested will also be indicated.
2. Timber harvesting will be planned in accordance with the Timber Harvest Cut-Block Design Manual (AFS, 1977) and established Annual Operating Plan Ground Rules.
3. Continued productivity of forested land will be ensured through:
 - i) intensive forest management techniques, where warranted;
 - ii) identification of presently non-stocked land demonstrating the capability to support coniferous species and the afforestation of the land indicating higher capabilities, using Phase 3 Forest Inventory data as it becomes available;

- iii) reforestation of harvested stands in accordance with the Timber Management Regulations (AR 60/73) and established reforestation policy; and
 - iv) reclamation of land surface disturbances.
4. Salvage logging will be utilized in the event of fire or infestations by insects or disease.

2.2.10 Water Resources

Objectives

1. To maintain water quality, quantity and flow regime as it relates to:
 - provision of water for onstream and downstream users;
 - provision of habitat for fish and wildlife populations;
 - provision of quality recreation experiences and
 - minimizing of erosion and stream sedimentation.
2. To strike a balance among conflicting needs of different resource users at an operational level, i.e. problem of drainage for till cropping and wetland habitat requirements for wildlife.

Guidelines

1. Provide management strategies, during planning stages, to prevent or minimize the impact of land use upon water quality.
2. The assessment of terrain sensitivity to determine soil conservation alternatives associated with land use activities will be undertaken in response to resource development proposals.
3. Use of multipurpose rights-of-way for infrastructure (roads, power lines, etc.) and required drainage works will be encouraged in order to reduce capital costs. This will require close interdepartmental co-ordination and planning.
4. Use of buffer strips, retention and detention areas for surface water control will be incorporated into the planning of the area prior to posting the land for disposition.

5. In cases requiring an assessment of land drainage potentials or the implementation of such programs, Alberta Environment will consult with Alberta Energy and Natural Resources and other affected agencies.

2.2.11 Wildlife

Objectives

1. To maintain viable populations of wildlife in the Jean D'Or Prairie planning area.
2. To develop and to maintain operational field programs which serve to prevent and to control wildlife damage to people and property and to minimize conflict between wildlife and society.
3. To encourage habitat retention in areas designated for agricultural development for the maintenance or enhancement of wildlife populations.

Guidelines

1. Management of consumptive uses of wildlife through enforcement of game hunting regulations.
2. Problems relating to wildlife caused damages will be addressed through the Fort Vermilion office and through internal programs.
3. The Fish and Wildlife Division, Habitat Protection Branch will participate in the Alberta Energy and Natural Resources referral system to ensure that the interests of the wildlife resource are addressed.

2.3 Resource Management Policy Land Allocation

The Jean D'Or Prairie planning area was divided into three land use zones during the plan policy step of the planning process. The land allocation was intended to accommodate the broad resource objectives achieving the management intent for the planning area.

The land use zones used in the planning area are listed and defined as follows. The land allocation is presented in Figure 4.

2.3.1 Agriculture

The Agriculture area includes land presently utilized or considered suitable for till cropping and domestic grazing. The focus in this area will be on activities related to sustained agricultural utilization. Land will be made available for agricultural expansion either by sale or other forms of disposition.

2.3.2 Multiple Use

The primary goal of the Multiple Use area is to allow the optimal utilization of available resources. The focus in this area will be on activities related to sustained yield timber harvesting, wildlife management, watershed management and domestic grazing.

2.3.3 Special Use

The Special Use area is intended to protect steep valley walls from erosion, as well as restrict use on land in the river flood plains. This area consists of the fluvial ecosections 8F1, 8F2 and 8F3 identified in the Ecological Land Classification and Evaluation - Jean D'Or Prairie (Strong, 1981).

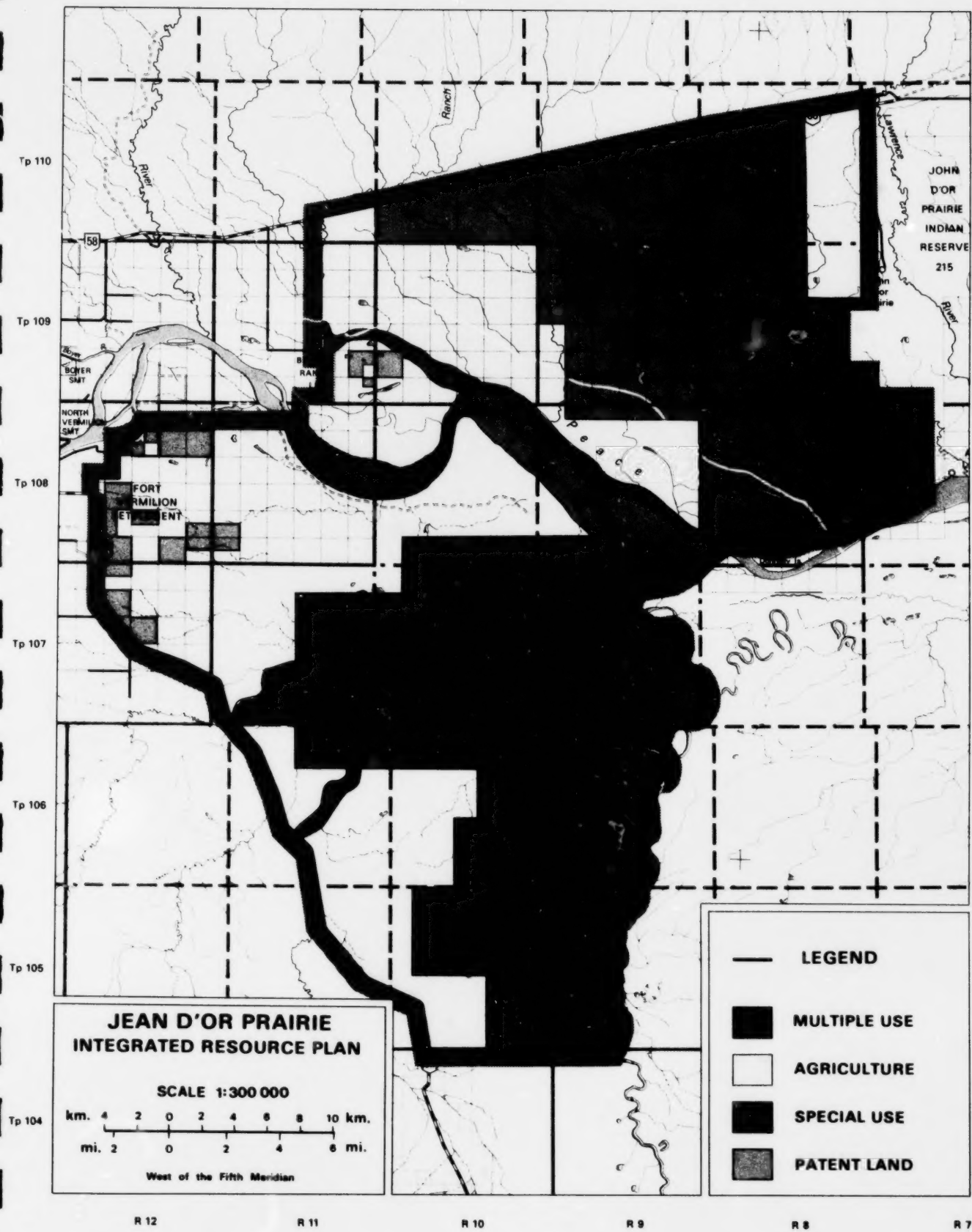


Fig.4 Resource Management Policy:Land Allocation

3. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AREAS

Following the completion of the plan policy step of the planning process, the planning team commenced work on the more detailed plan design step. The team reviewed the direction from Jean D'Or Prairie Sub-Regional Plan - Plan Policy (ENR 1982) and made recommendations based on more detailed information. At this stage, the planning area was divided into six Resource Management Areas (RMAs)¹ (Figure 5).

In this section, each RMA is examined individually. The location of the RMA, the specific management intent, the specific resource objectives and the resource management guidelines are presented.

The specific management intent is unique to each RMA while the specific resource objectives and resource management guidelines may be repeated in two or more RMAs. It is recognized that conflicts between specific resource management objectives will exist within each RMA, therefore, resource management guidelines are provided to aid in the integration of objectives and subsequently minimize conflict.

3.1 Fort Vermilion RMA

The Fort Vermilion RMA is located east of Fort Vermilion and focuses mainly on activities related to sustained yield agricultural utilization with special attention to erosion prevention along the Bear and Peace Rivers (see Figure 5).

3.1.1 Specific Management Intent

The intent of this RMA is to allocate suitable lands to expanding and beginning farmers, recognizing the integrity of other existing resources.

¹Resource Management Areas (RMAs) are geographic areas of common resource management intent.

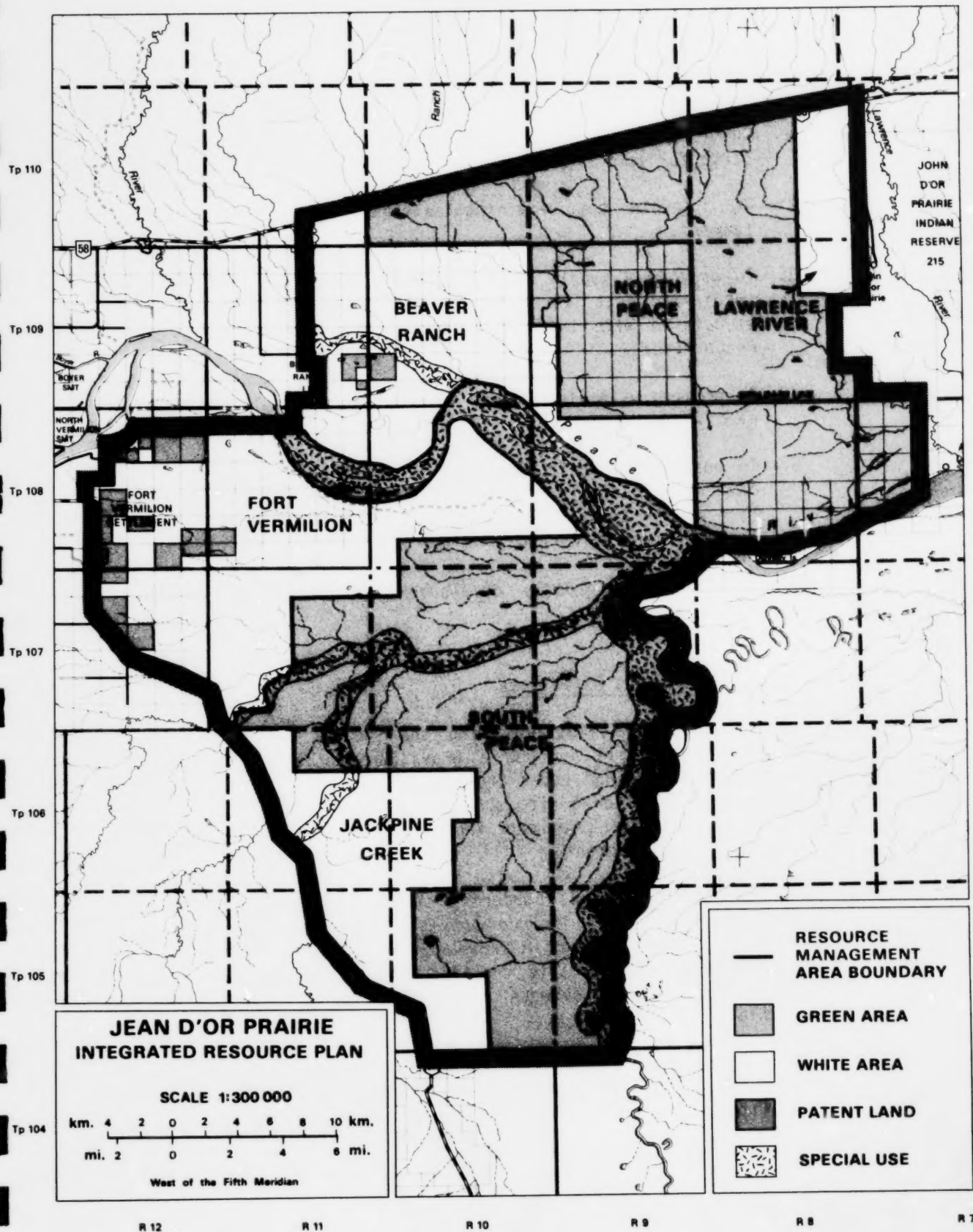


Fig. 5 Resource Management/Special Use Areas

3.1.2 Specific Resource Objectives

1. To allocate suitable lands in the vicinity of existing farms for farm expansion.
2. To allocate the remaining suitable lands to beginning farmers.
3. To provide a supply of primary forest products for use by local residents, recognizing special management conditions associated with the Special Use area along the Bear and Peace Rivers.
4. To provide wildlife control services to the public when the need is demonstrated.
5. To ensure that existing users of wildlife resources on a commercial basis (i.e. trappers) will be notified that the land within their trapline is to be posted for sale or to be leased and withdrawn from the trapline.
6. To facilitate orderly development of necessary surface drainage systems.

3.1.3 Resource Management Guidelines

1. Allocation of lands bordering the Special Use area along Bear River will include a provision for a minimum 30 m buffer maintained under Crown control. This buffer may be larger, based on a site specific assessment during posting in consultation between the Public Lands Division and Alberta Environment.
2. Allocation of lands bordering the Special Use area along Peace River will include provision for a minimum 100 m buffer maintained under Crown control. This buffer may be larger based on a site specific assessment during posting in consultation between the Public Lands Division and Alberta Environment.
3. Identification of areas supporting adequate volumes of mature timber will be identified for use by local residents (i.e. minimum 860 m³/quarter-section: sawlog basis).

4. Reservation of those areas, identified in Guideline 3, will be for a maximum period of five years or until the timber supply is exhausted. After the five-year maximum period has elapsed, an option to renew the reservation should be included if the volume of timber is still sufficient to satisfy the user's needs. The option will be terminated when the timber supply is exhausted.
5. Timber harvesting within Special Use area and other environmentally sensitive areas will be subject to environmental considerations as per accepted harvesting guidelines and the appropriate legislation and regulations as followed by the Alberta Energy and Natural Resources referral system.
6. No timber harvesting will occur in the Special Use area of the Bear River during frost-free periods.
7. The District Office of the Fish and Wildlife Division will respond to problem wildlife concerns reported by landowners and will attempt to provide control measures to alleviate the problem. Control measures may be used for wolves, bears, beavers or other species.
8. Public Lands Division will notify the Fish and Wildlife Division before posting lands for agricultural sale or lease so that trappers on registered lines can be notified of deletions from their areas. The Fish and Wildlife Division will then issue a letter to the senior trapper which will clearly identify the exact area deleted, the effective date of deletion and details of sale or lease.

3.2 Beaver Ranch RMA

The Beaver Ranch RMA is located north of the Peace River immediately east of the Beaver Ranch Indian Reserve (IR 163) (See Figure 5) and focuses mainly on activities related to sustained yield agricultural utilization with special attention to erosion prevention along Beaver Ranch Creek and the Peace River.

3.2.1 Specific Management Intent

The intent of this RMA is to allocate suitable lands to expanding farmers, relocating farmers and beginning farmers, recognizing the integrity of other existing resources.

3.2.2 Specific Resource Objectives

1. To allocate suitable lands in the vicinity of existing farms for farm expansion.
2. To allocate the remaining suitable lands to relocating and beginning farmers.
3. To provide a supply of primary forest products for use by local residents recognizing special management conditions associated with the Special Use area along Beaver Ranch Creek.
4. To provide wildlife control services to the public when the need is demonstrated.
5. To ensure that existing users of wildlife resources on a commercial basis (i.e. trappers) will be notified that the land within their trapline is to be posted for sale or to be leased and withdrawn from the trapline.
6. To facilitate orderly development of necessary surface drainage systems.

3.2.3 Resource Management Guidelines

1. Allocation of lands bordering the Special Use area along Beaver Ranch Creek include provision for a minimum 30 m buffer maintained under Crown control. This buffer may be larger, based on a site specific assessment during posting in consultation between the Public Lands Division and Alberta Environment.
2. Allocation of lands bordering the Special Use area along Peace River will include provision for a minimum 100 m buffer maintained under Crown control. This buffer may be larger based on a site specific assessment during posting in consultation between the Public Lands Division and Alberta Environment.
3. Land under temporary reservation in favor of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs will not be considered for agricultural disposition until a decision on the Tall Cree land entitlement is reached.

4. Identification of areas supporting adequate volumes of mature timber will be identified for use by local residents (i.e. minimum 860 m³/quarter-section: sawlog basis).
5. Reservation of those areas, identified in Guideline 3, will be for a maximum period of five years or until the timber supply is exhausted. After the five year maximum period has elapsed, an option to renew the reservation should be included if the volume of timber is still sufficient to satisfy the user's needs. The option will be terminated when the timber supply is exhausted.
6. Timber harvesting within Special Use area and other environmentally sensitive areas will be subject to environmental considerations as per accepted harvesting guidelines and the appropriate legislation and regulations as followed by the Alberta Energy and Natural Resources referral system.
7. No timber harvesting will occur in the Special Use area of the Beaver Ranch Creek during frost-free periods.
8. The District Office of the Fish and Wildlife Division will respond to problem wildlife concerns reported by landowners and will attempt to provide control measures to alleviate the problem. Control measures may be used for wolves, bears, beavers or other species.
9. Public Lands Division will notify the Fish and Wildlife Division before posting lands for agricultural sale or lease so that trappers on registered lines can be notified of deletions from their areas. The Fish and Wildlife Division will then issue a letter to the senior trapper which will clearly identify the exact area deleted, the effective date of deletion and details of sale or lease.

3.3 Jackpine Creek RMA

The Jackpine Creek RMA is located east of Highway 67 in the vicinity of Jackpine Creek (see Figure 5) and focuses mainly on activities related to sustained yield agricultural utilization with special attention to erosion prevention along the Jackpine Creek.

3.3.1 Specific Management Intent

The management intent of this RMA is to allocate lands for beginning farmers, recognizing the integrity of other existing resources.

3.3.2 Specific Resource Objectives

1. To allocate suitable lands to beginning farmers. Some residual lands may be designated for expansion of new farms.
2. To provide a supply of primary forest products for use by local residents, recognizing special management conditions associated with the Special Use area along the Jackpine Creek.
3. To provide wildlife control services to the public when the need is demonstrated.
4. To ensure that existing users of wildlife resources on a commercial basis (i.e. trappers) will be notified that the land within their trapline is to be posted for sale or to be leased and withdrawn from the trapline.
5. To facilitate orderly development of necessary surface drainage systems.

3.3.3 Resource Management Guidelines

1. Allocation of lands bordering the Special Use area along Jackpine Creek include provision for a minimum 30 m buffer maintained under Crown control. This buffer may be larger, based on a site specific assessment during posting in consultation between the Public Lands Division and Alberta Environment.
2. Identification of areas supporting adequate volumes of mature timber will be identified for use by local residents (i.e. minimum 860 m³/quarter-section: sawlog basis).
3. Reservation of those areas, identified in Guideline 2, will be for a maximum period of five years, or until the timber supply is exhausted. After the five-year maximum

period has elapsed, an option to renew the reservation should be included if the volume of timber is still sufficient to satisfy the user's needs. The option will be terminated when the timber supply is exhausted.

4. Timber harvesting within Special Use area and other environmentally sensitive areas will be subject to environmental considerations as per accepted harvesting guidelines and the appropriate legislation and regulations as followed by the Alberta Energy and Natural Resources referral system.
5. No timber harvesting will occur in the Special Use area of the Jackpine Creek during frost-free periods.
6. The District Office of the Fish and Wildlife Division will respond to problem wildlife concerns reported by landowners and will attempt to provide control measures to alleviate the problem. Control measures may be used for wolves, bears, beavers or other species.
7. Public Lands Division will notify the Fish and Wildlife Division before posting lands for agricultural sale or lease so that trappers on registered lines can be notified of deletions from their areas. The Fish and Wildlife Division will then issue a letter to the senior trappers which will clearly identify the exact area deleted, the effective date of deletion and details of sale or lease.

3.4 Lawrence River RMA

The Lawrence River RMA is located immediately west of the Jean D'Or Prairie Indian Reserve and focuses mainly on activities related to sustained yield agricultural utilization (see Figure 5).

3.4.1 Specific Management Intent

The management intent of this RMA is to allocate suitable lands to beginning farmers, recognizing the integrity of other existing resources. Because of the isolated location of this area, priority for development is low. Survey and posting of the area will not be considered until the Beaver Ranch RMA is fully developed.

3.4.2 Specific Resource Objectives

1. To allocate suitable lands to beginning farmers when the need is demonstrated. Some residual lands may be designated for expansion of these new farms.
2. To provide a supply of primary forest products for use by local residents.
3. To provide wildlife control services to the public when the need is demonstrated.
4. To ensure that existing users of wildlife resources on a commercial basis (i.e. trappers) will be notified that the land within their trapline is to be posted for sale or to be leased and withdrawn from the trapline.
5. To facilitate orderly development of necessary surface drainage systems.

3.4.3 Resource Management Guidelines

1. Immediate applicants for agricultural land will be directed to apply for land in the Beaver Ranch or other agricultural RMAs.
2. Identification of areas supporting adequate volumes of mature timber will be identified for use by local residents (i.e. minimum 860 m³/quarter-section: sawlog basis).
3. Reservation of those areas, identified in Guideline 2, will be for a maximum period of five years or until the timber supply is exhausted. After the five-year maximum period has elapsed, an option to renew the reservation should be included if the volume of timber is still sufficient to satisfy the user's needs. The option will be terminated when the timber supply is exhausted.
4. The District Office of the Fish and Wildlife Division will respond to problem wildlife concerns reported by landowners and will attempt to provide control measures to alleviate the problem. Control measures may be used for wolves, bears, beavers or other species.

5. Public Lands Division will notify the Fish and Wildlife Division before posting land for agricultural sale or lease so that trappers on registered lines can be notified of deletions from their areas. The Fish and Wildlife Division will then issue a letter to the senior trapper which will clearly identify the exact area deleted, the effective date of deletion and details of sale or lease.

3.5 North Peace RMA

The North Peace RMA is located west of the Lawrence River RMA, north of the Peace River and south of Highway 58 (see Figure 5). It focuses mainly on activities related to sustained yield timber harvesting, wildlife management, watershed management and domestic grazing. Special attention will be given to erosion prevention on a small area along the Peace River.

3.5.1 Specific Management Intent

The intent of the North Peace RMA is to provide for a full range of resource management programs and development under the multiple use concept. Priority will be given to the long term production of forest products and the integration of timber management programs with range management programs.

3.5.2 Specific Resource Objectives

1. To maintain present timber volume commitments under the F7-Q1 Coniferous Timber Quota and the F7 Miscellaneous Timber Use area.
2. To determine future timber volume commitments in the F7-Q1 Coniferous Timber Quota and the F7 Miscellaneous Timber Use area.
3. To provide supplemental rangeland for use by local residents.
4. To determine the feasibility of improving carrying capacity on grazing dispositions through range management.
5. To maintain existing fisheries and wildlife resources and habitat required to support those resources.

6. To control the incidence of livestock depredation.
7. To provide recreational and subsistence hunting at existing or higher levels.

3.5.3 Resource Management Guidelines

1. Management according to existing Timber Management Plan (revised: May 1971) for the F7 Forest Management Unit.
2. The reforestation of cut over areas will be required to ensure the sustained production of timber products.
3. Future management determined by using Phase 3 Forest Inventory preceeding the Timber Management Plan revision scheduled for completion toward the end of 1985.
4. In the management of domestic grazing, preference will be given to those applicants residing in Improvement District No. 23, east of Range 14 (W5M) and north of the Peace River.
5. Disposition will be given in the form of Forest Grazing Licences to ensure the compatible development of resource management programs.
6. The Fish and Wildlife Division will review land use applications and recommend the best methods to protect the fish and wildlife resources within the RMA and, in particular, the Special Use area.
7. Control measures for problem wildlife will be restricted to wolves or occasionally bears and, as in other RMAs, they will be implemented by district Fish and Wildlife staff in the Fort Vermilion office.
8. Management of hunting will be used as a tool to regulate game populations. Hunting will be regulated according to the Wildlife Act, RSA 1980.
9. Intensive recreational facility development will not be considered.

3.6 South Peace RMA

The South Peace RMA is located west of the Wabasca River, south of the Peace River (see Figure 5). It focuses mainly on activities related to sustained yield timber harvesting, wildlife management, watershed management and domestic grazing. Special attention will be given to erosion prevention on a large portion of a Special Use area along the Peace, Wabasca and Bear Rivers and Jackpine Creek.

3.6.1 Specific Management Intent

The intent of the South Peace RMA is to provide for a full range of resource management programs and development within the multiple use concept. Particular attention will be directed toward timber resource commitments, and a limited degree of domestic grazing and water-based recreational opportunities.

3.6.2 Specific Resource Objectives

1. To retain the islands and the flood plains of the Peace River for sustained yield timber management.
2. To harvest timber on the islands and the flood plains, recognizing special management conditions associated with Special Use areas along the Peace, Wabasca and Bear Rivers and the Jackpine Creek.
3. To maintain present timber volume commitments under the F5-Q1 Coniferous Timber Quota.
4. To determine future timber volume commitments under the F5-Q1 Coniferous Timber Quota and to assess the need for a F5 Miscellaneous Timber Use Area.
5. To maintain existing fisheries and wildlife resources and habitat required to support those resources.
6. To provide supplemental rangeland for use by local residents.
7. To control the incidence of livestock predation.

8. To retain or increase existing game populations through maintenance of habitat and manipulation of land uses.
9. To provide recreational and subsistence hunting and fishing at existing or higher levels.
10. To monitor, and continue to provide, water-based recreational opportunities.
11. To regulate land use practices to reduce soil erosion.

3.6.3 Resource Management Guidelines

1. Present management according to the existing Timber Management Plan (revised: June 1971) for the F5 Forest Management Unit.
 - i) Timber harvesting will be carried out with regard for Special Use area indicated on Figure 5.
 - ii) Winter harvesting operations will continue to be employed within the Special Use area.
 - iii) Alberta Environment will be consulted prior to harvesting in the Special Use area in addition to those agencies involved in the Alberta Energy and Natural Resources referral system.
2. Future management determined by using Phase 3 Forest Inventory data preceding a Timber Management Plan revision scheduled for completion toward the end of 1985.
3. The Fish and Wildlife Division will review land use applications and recommend the best methods to protect the fish and wildlife resources within the RMA and, in particular, the Special Use area.
4. Control measures for problem wildlife will be restricted to wolves or occasionally bears and, as in other RMAs, they will be implemented by district Fish and Wildlife staff in the Fort Vermilion office.
5. Management of hunting will be used as a tool to regulate game populations. Hunting will be regulated according to the Wildlife Act, RSA 1980.

6. In the management of domestic grazing, preference will be given to those applicants residing in the Fort Vermilion and Jackpine Creek RMAs.
7. The need for water access points associated with the Peace River and Wabasca River drainages will be assessed. Changes to the level of recreational uses requiring water access points will be indicated during annual plan reviews.
8. Assessment of potential impacts from development proposals will involve the inspection and analysis of site characteristics such as terrain sensitivity. Land use practices and resource developments can then be regulated through the Alberta Energy and Natural Resources referral system subject to accepted operating guidelines and the appropriate legislation and regulations.

4. GREEN AREA BOUNDARY

The main task of the planning team, following a full evaluation of the planning area, was the refinement of the Green Area boundary. The administrative adjustment was necessary to accomodate the agricultural expansion recommendations in the plan. The result is an increase in the White Area and subsequnt decrease in the Green Area.

Figure 6 represents the new Green Area boundary.

The following are definitions of the White Area and Green Area.

White Area

Available public lands in this area, which are suitable for the proposed use and are not required for conservation, recreational, wildlife habitat, forestry and other purposes, may be applied for pursuant to the Public Lands Act and the regulations.

Green Area

Forest lands not available for agricultural development other than grazing. Provincial public lands are managed for multiple uses, including forest production, water, recreation, fish and wildlife, grazing and industrial development.²

²Alberta Public Lands (Alberta Energy and Natural Resources, 1981).

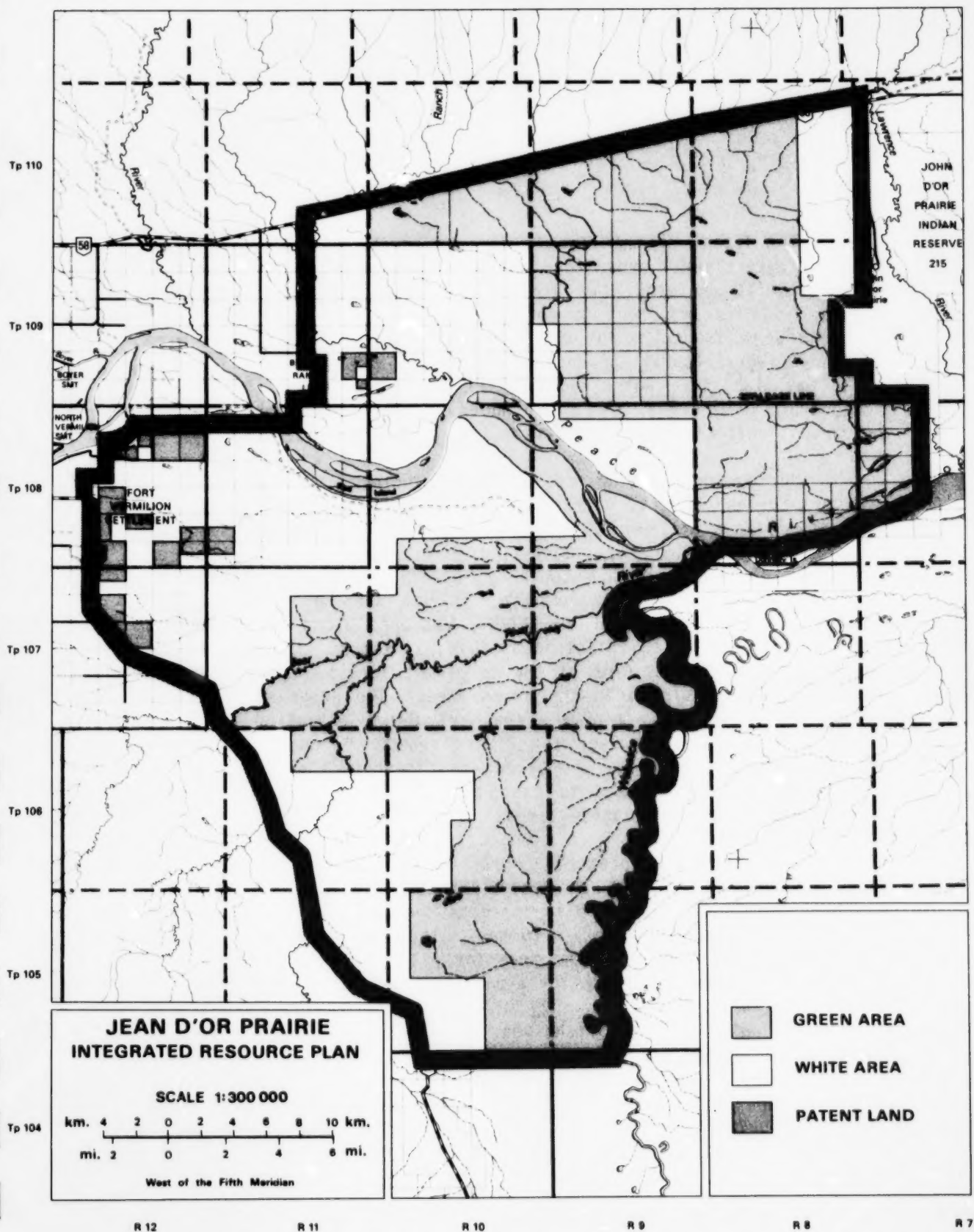


Fig.6 Green/White Areas

5. IMPLICATIONS

The intent of the plan is to make available additional public land for agricultural expansion. This demand is mainly for land suitable for till cropping, but there is a latent demand for domestic grazing. It is important to note that agricultural expansion cannot take place in isolation for other resource concerns within the area. Increased agricultural production, through expansion, will affect timber availability, watershed management and fisheries and wildlife management. Therefore, the plan should result in the optimum use of resources, reflected by capability and demand.

During the planning process, the planning team established the agriculture land base by redefining the Green/White Area boundary. An area of approximately 38 866 ha (96 000 acres) of unsettled land with agricultural capability was identified and included in the White Area. By firmly establishing this boundary, benefits reach far beyond the agriculture resource. For example, it has been a concern of the AFS, that the management of the timber resource along the Green Area boundary was difficult, if not impossible, at times. This concern was due to the constant erosion of the permanent forest land base due to agricultural expansion into the Green Area. The Green Area boundary established in the plan, focuses the agriculture expansion activities and allows the AFS to manage the timber resource along that boundary with confidence. As well, the Green Area identified provides the AFS with an adequate land base to meet the demands of the Timber Quota Commitments within the planning area.

The concerns expressed by residents of the High Level-Fort Vermilion area dealt with the establishment of a "viable farm community". It was their desire to increase the population base and subsequently the demand for agri-services. The plan makes provision for this by designating much of the area for allocation to new farm units while maintaining a land base for expansion of existing farm units.

The wildlife and fisheries resources will be affected by agricultural expansion. Increased pressure for recreational hunting and fishing, and subsequently increased violations of Fish and Wildlife Regulations may warrant more attention to management and enforcement. There will also be an increase in the number of complaints of problem

wildlife (i.e. beavers and wolves). Although agricultural expansion may appear to have major effects on a regional basis, it is a familiar pattern of land use change in Alberta.

Environmental sensitivity along water courses was identified by planning team members and consultants as a concern for the planning area. Recognizing this, the planning team used an ecologically based map to determine areas requiring special protection. The result was the identification of a Special Use area which restricts use of the land in river flood plains as well as protects steep valley walls from erosion. This area conveniently corresponds with important fisheries and wildlife areas and areas with potential for recreation.

In summary, the recommended expansion of the agricultural land base can be achieved with minimal adverse effects on other resources in the Jean D'Or Prairie planning area while providing resource use and management benefits to the region.

6. PLAN MANAGEMENT

General administrative procedures and mechanisms required for plan management, monitoring and amendment are outlined in this section. Detailed program and project implications and associated benefits and costs incurred as a result of this plan will be contained in a supplemental implementation document (Peace River Regional Resource Management Committee, in prep.). This document, subject to approval by the Government of Alberta, will complement the plan.

General Administration

The Jean D'Or Prairie Sub-Regional Integrated Resource Plan will be made operative within the terms of appropriate legislation, regular programs and activities of the government, operational plans, specific developed projects, referral processes and administrative bodies. The RMAs provide a means of processing applications for new public land dispositions within the planning area. Existing systems for referral and interdepartmental review will apply to the plan. Resources will continue to be administered by the departments responsible, in line with the provisions of the plan including resource management guidelines and any subsequent operational plans.

Participating government management agencies will have several responsibilities to ensure the effective delivery of this plan. It will be their responsibility to deal with any conflicts or concerns with respect to implementation or interpretation of any of the plan's provisions. The responsibilities are outlined by subject area below.

Referral Systems: Participating government management agencies will ensure that existing referral systems of the Alberta government (e.g., Alberta Energy and Natural Resources, 1981a, 1981b) are adequate to encompass all affected or concerned agencies.

Plan Monitoring: The Jean D'Or Prairie Sub-Regional Integrated Resource Plan will be reviewed annually by the Peace River Regional Resource Management Committee (PR RRMCM) to:

- assess the relevancy of the stated resource objectives in light of changing conditions;

- assess the resource management guidelines and referral procedures;
- assess agency operational plans to ensure their consistency with the resource management area intents, objectives and guidelines; and
- recommend amendments to the Integrated Resource Plan and future actions required to maintain or promote government resource management activities in the planning area.

An annual report will document changes in the plan. The report will also highlight the previous year's activity in the planning area, including the number, type and location of referrals and what conflicts or concerns were addressed and resolved. The report will also indicate what might be expected to be accomplished in the planning area during the next year. The report may be deferred if it is not needed because of a lack of activity or progress on government resource management objectives within the planning area.

A major plan review by the Peace River Regional Resource Management Committee will occur at five-year intervals to facilitate:

- a comprehensive assessment of all aspects of the plan, including but not limited to, broad resource management objectives, and resource management area boundaries and intents;
- a public review on the same basis as in the development of new integrated resource plans; and
- a statement recommending amendments to the plan and future actions required to maintain or promote government resource management activities in the planning area.

A report will document all amendments. Major plan reviews may be undertaken more or less frequently than every five years if major resource policy commitments or developments of program initiatives require them.

Amendment Procedures: Changes to the planning area boundary, broad planning area resource management objectives, the refined land-use zoning, and the resource management area boundaries and intents will require major amendment to the plan. An amendment to the plan may be required as a result of an annual review, major five-year review,

government request or a request from an individual, group or organization outside the government. Proposed amendments to the plan from outside the government should be made by formal application to the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Resource Evaluation and Planning Division, Alberta Energy and Natural Resources.³ Opportunities for public review of proposed amendments to the plan will be provided before changes are approved by the government. Amendments which entail a major policy decision or a change to the basic intent of the plan may be forwarded by the Associate Minister to the Cabinet Committee for approval.

³Guidelines for preparing requests for amendments to integrated resource plans are available upon request.

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